

# ADHD

## An Invented Condition?



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# ADHD – An Invented Condition?

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Spank your naughty child and social workers will take them away from you – you could even go to prison – but it's OK to give them the kind of drugs that if sold on the streets would constitute a serious criminal offence. I am of course talking about Ritalin – chemical castration for the brain!

When I was at school, we had our fair share of class swots – always handed in their homework on time, always got top marks, always did their work neatly, presented it in clean exercise books, and were coincidentally, mostly from middle class families. They mostly went on to universities and are now in all probability well on their way to healthy pensions.

Not that there's anything wrong with that – they work hard, lead productive lives, are [mostly] model citizens and they deserve to enjoy the fruits of a life's work. They are conformers, and there's nothing wrong with that either. They married people who also handed in their homework on time, got top marks, did their work neatly, and also came from similar middle class backgrounds. Their children handed in *their* homework on time, got top marks and presented their work neatly in clean exercise books. Barring the unexpected, they now watch their grandchildren develop and achieve good grades in their exams. They go on annual cruises, safari holidays and go to golf club dinners.

I was very lucky. I went to a good school, with excellent teachers and good discipline. By the time I left, aged 17, corporal punishment had been abolished and the discipline discipline had become slightly er... less disciplined. It was not so much the fear of the terrible retribution, ever lurking below the surface that persuaded us to behave, but first and foremost the respect we had learned at home from our parents. *They* also worked hard and many had served their country in its time of greatest need. My father for example served with the RAF in WWII and my grandfather volunteered in both wars.

Nonetheless, secure in a well-ordered Grammar school, we were also aware that not every schoolboy was the same. The kids from another not too far away school smoked at the bus stop, stole from the newsagent's and sported what can only be described as a more liberal style of school uniform, and some had dispensed with the inconvenience of it altogether.

These were the ones our parents had warned us about. Not for them any worry about handing *their* homework in on time, because they never did any. Their time was spent hanging out on the street with *their* peers. They would look forward to a life of repetitive work, low wages, troubled, neglected offspring, sometimes birthed by different mothers, and occasional encounters with the police. You only have to watch a few episodes of the disgraceful Jeremy Kyle Show to see how the cycle will inevitably repeat itself.

There has always been social division in the world. The standards of the haves are passed down to their offspring, just as the standards (or lack of them) of the have-nots get passed to their offspring. It's part of the cycle of life on planet Earth. All children are hugely influenced by the behaviour and the attitudes of their parents. Academic and social success is also governed by the effort and ambition of the parents.

The children of Ugandan Asian immigrants arriving Britain, after His Excellency President Doctor Idi Amin Dada politely asked them to leave Uganda, have prospered in the UK, as

have the Chinese and most other immigrant groups. They arrived with nothing, they worked extra hard and they made sure their children made the most of what Britain had to offer. They understood the dangerous fragility of a life in poverty and the absolute necessity of hard work to achieve security for themselves and their progeny. Their children hand in their homework on time, get top marks, do their work neatly in clean exercise books, pass their exams and thus end up at university. A significant number end up at Oxford and Cambridge. Put another way, they understand the value of the work ethic.

ADHD is almost unknown in Indian and Chinese communities and this obvious disparity raises an interesting question. Why then is ADHD so common in benefit dependent white families?

This is the moment I stick my head above the parapet and probably commit some kind of criminal offence. It seems to me that ADHD is no more a disease than the lack of parental care and discipline that causes it. A friend of mine, also a very experienced and successful hypnotist (no names for the paralytically correct firing squad) said he thought ADHD was a council estate disease. He is almost certainly right. Most of the children diagnosed with ADHD hail from families where parental responsibility – and the part it plays in successful child rearing – is an alien concept.

The politically correct woke brigade will have heart failure at the mere mention of this idea. But the fact is that well-to-do parents never put their kids on Ritalin. Instead, they talk to them, they spend quality time with them and they monitor their progress at a school as growing, developing human beings. They instil in them a sense of respect, for themselves and others, a sense of self-worth and self-discipline, and above all, the idea that the way to be the best is to do your best. This is what's known as *'taking an interest'*. All it requires is time and dedication to one's own flesh and blood. Look very carefully... it's the kids from the families whose mothers and fathers are unwilling or unable to engage in good parenting or give their children the correct guidance in their formative years who are on prescription drugs.

There has been a terrible price to pay for this short-term Ritalin based solution. Children drugged up on Ritalin (the so called chemical cosh) do not learn the same academic or social skills as children who are not. Instead, they are swept under the carpet and robbed of their ability – and their right – to develop and prosper. It doesn't take a genius to work out that this policy is storing up huge problems for the future!

There are no two ways about it. Prescribing Ritalin to children is legalised government-sponsored drug dealing. Cannabis and a dozen other illegal drugs have exactly the same effect – taking them can land you with a criminal record. The government continually lectures us on the pitfalls of smoking and drinking, yet they allow our children to be pumped full of mind-altering drugs, of which Ritalin is the market leader. If it were cannabis they were dishing out there would be an outcry.

The Government's official health policy on ADHD is tragically flawed. It's a perfect example of what happens when politicians take the line of least resistance in a desperate attempt to ease the financial burden on government services. Our education and healthcare systems are already stretched to breaking point so it's cheaper to dole out the pills rather than make the effort to administer the more traditional tried and tested good talking to.

Of course the government recognises that you can't legislate against parents who can't be bothered, so in the absence of good parenting, the quick, cheap solution is pill-popping for eight year olds.

Naughty children have been around since the dawn of humanity. The cure has always been proper parenting and firm discipline. In America, they call it tough love.

It is often claimed that parents are just too busy. In an ideal world people should be means tested before they are allowed to reproduce. If you can't do it properly, then don't do it at all. One British judge recently stated that criminal parents should have their babies taken away and re-homed with non-criminal foster families. The reason behind this blindingly obvious remark is that those children would then be far less likely to turn to crime themselves. It would be a very brave government indeed who went down that road, and I don't expect it will happen anytime soon.

The inconvenient truth however, is that the ability to give birth is nothing special. Half the population can do it, and in fairness, most plan their pregnancies in line with their ability to bring up offspring responsibly, taking into consideration such factors as finances and the time and resources they reasonably expect to have available. These are the people who handed their homework in on time and exercised a degree of self-discipline. They plan their families sensibly and are more likely to make sure their children do *their* homework. Sad the lot of the child conceived as a result of a Friday night on the piss.

Humanity is not an endangered species, although one could be forgiven for thinking that self-discipline is an endangered character trait. Soon, there will be more people on the planet than available resources. It means that some kind of husbandry is inevitable.

It could be argued that the rich can have as many children as they wish by virtue of the fact that they will be able to afford to feed, clothe and educate them. I see nothing wrong with that. Better than letting the Mick Philpotts of this world siphon off the wealth of the country via the benefits system, bringing innumerable children – 12 of them I believe – into the world with no realistic prospect of caring for any one of them properly. Until compulsory sterilisation is introduced, the problem of problem children will remain a problem. In the meantime, Ritalin has emerged the winner.

Big Pharma has identified certain conditions and reinvented them as diseases so they can sell more pills. The number of prescriptions for Ritalin, dished out by doctors who are either too busy – or more to the point find it impossible to get through to parents – has risen by 50% in just five years. From 420,000 to 650,000!

One problem is that children will learn that the answer to any problem is to pop a pill. But is that really the message we want to send to children? The good news for Big Pharma is that ADHD drugs are now worth more than £12billion a year.

Turning children into sedated zombies however is only part of a much larger problem. There are often disturbing side effects for children, such as depression, which then leads to more drugs. Another side effect is a loss of appetite, almost certainly the result of the child not doing normal child things like playing. Your child now spends break times sat in the classroom, quietly sedated.

I believe my colleague really did identify the common denominator – ADHD *is* a council estate disease – and all the evidence supports that observation. Schools can't cope with undisciplined children from undisciplined parents, and so legal sedation is the quick legal solution. The upside is that when these kids eventually leave school, we will have a ready supply of labourers, bin-men and supermarket shelf-stackers. All very convenient for servicing modern cities, where emptying the bins is a very important job, but the big drawback is that it also stymies creativity and originality in the children it's supposed to be

helping. Remember, these kids are not mentally ill – they just don't have the same opportunity!

One must also understand that overworked GPs will opt for the line of least resistance. Put yourself in a GP's shoes for a moment. Write a report, follow it with a prescription – at least the scumbag parents won't bother you any more, not that you'd get through to them anyway.

The UK government claims 5% of children suffer from ADHD. This is something that was unheard of 20 years ago. In the US it's considered to be as high as 10%.

In France, Germany and Italy, where family ties are stronger than in the UK or the US, and where families go out together, play, dine and entertain together, ADHD is almost unknown. What does that tell you? The real problem is that ADHD is being treated as a disease, which is the one thing it isn't!

ADHD has become the newspeak for any type of behavioural problem. All children, are different. Some are naturally talented in certain areas, for example in music and the arts or in sports, whilst some children are naturally boisterous. Children finding it hard to concentrate for periods of time, should have their energies and talents directed elsewhere, somewhere where they will be useful and allow the child to realise its own potential. The fundamental mistake has been to assume that our schools should be turning out scholarly clones. In any case, that can never happen because it's an impossible task.

That children need discipline is as true today as it ever was, particularly with the new temptations provided by their new best friends – the Internet and social media. It isn't possible to administer a smack on the bottom anymore! We're not talking about a brutal beating of course – all agree that would amount to abuse – but the traditional short sharp shock is tried and tested. It's reflected throughout the animal kingdom, where adults often give their cubs a cuff to bring them back into line. It's been an integral part of the human evolutionary process for millennia.

Undisciplined kids grow up to be undisciplined adults and undisciplined adults can't form cohesive or productive social groups. The newspeak we all have learn but deep down know won't work, includes new descriptions for temper tantrums, now called Disruptive Mood Disregulation Disorder (DMDD).

Disobedience (which all children experiment with from time to time as they test the boundaries and their parent's patience) is part of life. Except it's now called Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD). The cure for both these conditions are more drugs and more zombified kids.

We can't all afford qualified nannies, but, engaging properly with children at this most important stage of their development would, in the long run, actually be more cost-effective than years of expensive drugs followed by decades of dependency on social services, the dole, the benefit culture and in extreme cases the police service and legal aid. The bottom line is that happy children make good and productive adult citizens – spaced out kids don't.

Despite all I have just written, it's too easy to join the chorus of 'I blame the parents.' That would be unfair and has the wrong emotional connotations, if only because parents who themselves did not have a proper upbringing cannot be expected to cope with the onslaught of their own unruly kids. The parents also need assistance.

In the paralytically correct twenty-first century, parents have become afraid of their own authority because of the ever-present spectre of the predatory social services. Memories of the disgraceful Cleveland child abuse scandal still linger.

But ADHD is now classed as a disability, enabling parents to claim benefits. Carer's allowances and disabled child tax credits have in a depressingly large number of cases turned children into cash cows. Some parents get benefit funded cars. It's hard to believe, but there really are parents out there who don't give a damn about their children and are only too happy to exploit them, just as there are women who get pregnant so they can upgrade from a council flat to a council house, or who get pregnant in an attempt to avoid prison sentences.

In the UK in 2013 there were 43,000 families receiving extra benefit payments for ADHD children. Our beautiful, precious, vulnerable, innocent children are being turned into licensed junkies. So what if some of them are badly behaved? What's next – frontal lobotomies available at Tesco next to the Botox counter? Anything... so long as the little buggers keep quiet so I can watch *Eastenders* in peace!

Or... you could try raising your voice every so slightly, making eye contact and saying firmly *'put that down, turn it off, and do your homework – and if you don't do it, then no more computer, Xbox or mobile phone for a week!'*

But you have to mean it and stick to it. That is assuming of course, that as a parent, you can be bothered.

A recent study, published in the *Journal of Paediatrics*, suggests that the solution may have been staring us in the face all the time! It might just be that all those kids with ADHD might just be too young and immature to be in that particular classroom in the first place. Astonishingly, babies born in August are more likely to be at risk of being diagnosed with the accursed ADHD than those born in September.

This makes perfect sense, after all, of the half million kids diagnosed, researchers have discovered that it is the youngest kids in class that are more at risk. What this means, in simple language, is that the younger kids don't have the same emotional maturity as the older kids. Worse, teachers, parents and psychologists have been making a dreadful mistake – they have been judging the youngest by the higher standards of the oldest and brightest.

It has long been accepted that the month in which a child is born has also been found to affect educational achievement, with older pupils getting better grades than their younger peers, so the oversight is nothing short of horrific – it means some children are being misdiagnosed, even discriminated against, because of their age and reduced ability to learn. If that is really the case, then the whole ADHD phenomenon is more than a dreadful mistake and more the result of gross incompetence!

True enough: the number of boys thought to suffer from ADHD who were born in August is 4.5% compared to 2.5% for those born in September. Likewise 2.9 per cent of girls born in August had been diagnosed, compared with only 1.8 per cent born in September.

Obviously other factors have a role to play such as nature and family environment, but the age gap is just too big to ignore. Researchers have confirmed that the youngest children in a school year are more likely to be diagnosed with the condition. Thus 'developmental immaturity' may be a significant factor in the diagnosis. But let's not forget that these children are receiving what could be totally unnecessary medication!

These figures are consistent with previous studies in the US and Canada and imply that increasing age and maturity reduces the impact of birth month on ADHD diagnoses – but remember, it is mainly the very young who are getting the Ritalin. The symptoms include impulsivity, fidgeting and excessive talking – all normal features of children’s development. I suspect that the obsession with ‘pigeon-holing’ behaviour is the main culprit. But then try convincing the drug companies of that – *their* kids go to the best private schools, so what the hell – just keep selling the pills and counting the profits!

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